

SUBJECT Comparison of US and Soviet Academic Degrees and Titles

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Degrees

1. It is difficult to compare the educational status (degree) of the Soviet with the US educational institution degree. The Soviet system is a very well regulated system. Then, too, there is no connection between the educational status one has and an educational title. I should like to explain the degrees of education in the Soviet first.
2. The first degree of education is the "elementary" or "four-year". One who has completed four grades is referred to as a "Nachalnoe". The next step is in the ten year grade and one who is in this class is referred to as "Nepolnoe Srednee" or "incomplete middle". One who has completed high school (gymnasium) or a special technical institute is referred to as "Polnoe Srednee" or "complete middle".
3. The next higher degrees of education are as follows:
 - a. Vysshee (higher) - - - This term is applied to one who has completed a four or five-year college course, the number of years depending upon the course taken. For example, a doctor of medicine must complete a five-year course. The "Vysshee" does not receive a degree, merely a diploma. However, the "Vysshee" is comparable to a US bachelor's degree and, as can be seen, may be of even more value.
 - b. Kandidat (Candidate) - - Once one has completed the "Vysshee" or higher level, he is eligible to become a "kandidat". This is nearest to a US master's degree. However, unlike the US, in the Soviet one can

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- 2 -

work for his status as a "Kandidat" at an educational institution, at an industry or on his own. There is no set curriculum. Neither is there a time limit. The individual is free to call on an educational institution for assistance if necessary. It should be borne in mind that a "Kandidat" is always a "Kandidat" in a certain field; i.e., chemistry, physics, philosophy, psychology, etc. To reach the "Kandidat" status, the individual must complete research in his field and prepare his thesis. Because his thesis must be publicly defended, he must find a professor or otherwise qualified individual to present and argue his findings. The thesis is then submitted to a university or to an educational institution connected with a particular industry (if it concerns an industry). It can be said that on the whole, one who has successfully gained the status of a "Kandidat" is much more qualified in his field than the average holder of a US master's degree because of the extensive time and work spent on research.

c. Doktor - - - The status of "Doktor" in the Soviet is divided into two classes: the foreign "Doktor" and the Soviet "Doktor". The degree of "Doktor" conferred by foreign countries (in particular, Germany, Austria and France) was not considered to be as good as the Soviet "Doktor", namely because the foreign degree was obtained by completing a set curriculum in a set time. On the other hand, the Soviet Doktor had to complete an extensive research problem in his particular field and it was harder for him to obtain the status. From a purely educational standpoint the foreign "Doktor" had a more rounded background, whereas the Soviet "Doktor" usually knew only his particular field. To further explain, a "Vysshee" would complete a chemistry curriculum at college. He would then start working in the leather industry and apply himself towards becoming a "Kandidat" in leather chemistry. Upon reaching the "Kandidat" status he would go on and become "Doktor" of Chemistry. However, he would only know leather chemistry and would not be as broadly educated in chemistry as a US Doctor of Chemistry. It can, therefore, be seen that the Soviet "Doktor" is not always as well qualified as the US Doctor educationally.

d. Member-Correspondent - The "Member-Correspondent" is one who has gained recognition in a particular field and is honored by the title. Usually, it is the result of much study and practical application. However, it is not always so, for the Communist Party recognizes Party loyalty and Party work and sometimes confers the title to special Party members. Generally, however, in the field of science, the "Member-Correspondent" is a Doktor and well qualified. There is no comparison of any such degree in the US.

e. Akademik - - - The "Akademik" is the highest "degree" that can be earned in the USSR. It reflects the highest recognition in a particular field and is conferred on individuals who have previously been recognized as "Member-correspondents". Here again politics plays a part in some cases, and, like those elected "Member-correspondents", pure education is not an important factor. Again there is no comparison of "Akademik" to any degree in the US.

There are Academies of Sciences on the Republic level as well as the All-Union (or Soviet) Academy of Sciences and "Academiks" are usually elected as members to each, the "Akademik" of the All-Union Academy of Sciences being the highest "degree" that can be bestowed. Members can be elected to the All-Union Academy without having been previously so recognized by an Academy on the Republic level. The difference is in the fact

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50X1

- 3 -

that a member of the Republic Academy is recognized for outstanding work on a so-called local level while a Member of the All-Union Academy is so recognized for outstanding work of an all-union or national significance. It follows, therefore, that recognition by the All-Union Academy of Sciences is the highest "degree" to be afforded the Soviet scientist or specialist.

Both the All-Union Academy of Sciences and Republic Academies of Sciences have their own, separate, research institutions. Invariably the Director of such an Institute is an "Academik" and, with the exception of the Moscow and Leningrad Institutes, there is only one "Academik" connected with the Institute, the department heads being "Member-correspondents".

"Academiks" are not always associated with an Academy of Sciences Institute. They can be associated with an educational institution, as many are, or, as in the case of the civil engineer (whose name I cannot recall) who built the huge canal to the Baltic, be associated with neither. This latter is the exception.

Therefore, looking at the fact that the Soviet scientist is not only honored for his outstanding work but is in effect granted "degrees" of "Member-correspondent" and member of first, the Republic Academies, and then the All-Union Academy, I feel that such recognition is beyond the honor bestowed on US scientists by being elected members of the US Academy of Sciences. Next, the academies have their working, research institutes where the bulk of the "Academiks" devote their time to continuous problems in their special fields. Then, too, the Soviet "Academik" has invariably spent many years of work in his field and has accomplished great results (for the Soviet). The fact that the total number of Members of the All-Union Academy of Sciences is but some 200 reflects the restrictions placed on scientists in being elected "Academiks". The Soviet academies of sciences are working institutions not like the US National Academy of Sciences which is more or less of an advisory board.

Educational Institution Titles

4. The following titles are given to those individuals who make a career of education:

- a. Aspirant - - - To make a correct comparison of an "Aspirant" to a similar title in a US educational institution is difficult. The closest one might come to the "Aspirant" degree is a graduate student of education in the US. The Soviet "Aspirant" is a "Vysshee" who wants to make a career of education. He either applies for or is appointed to the post and when accepted by a particular institution he starts his training to become an assistant. He observes the professor in action in the classroom and laboratory; corrects examination papers, monitors classes and supervises some practical work. He may give trial lectures occasionally. In brief, he is learning to be a teacher.
- b. Assistant - - - The next highest position for an "Aspirant" is that of an "Assistant". After the "Aspirant" has completed a required period of training, he does not automatically become an "Assistant". An educational institution has a set number of positions. Therefore, as openings occur through promotions, expansion, etc, new men are moved ahead. Whether or not an "Assistant" must be a "Kandidat" depends on the institution to which he is attached. An "Assistant" is an instructor and assistant to a professor in one particular department.

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- 4 -

- c. Docent - - - The "Assistant" next moves on to being a "Docent", depending again upon openings or vacancies available. A "Docent" usually is also a "Kandidat" but, as is common in the Soviet, there can be exceptions. For example, a loyal Party man can be moved to a "Docent" position without being a "Kandidat" and, after being promoted, he is given a reasonable period of time to become a "Kandidat".
- d. Professor - - The Soviet professor usually has a "Doktor's" degree, again with the usual Soviet exceptions. He is the head of a department and usually a very well qualified man, comparable to the US professor. It is not mandatory that he hold the degree of "Doktor".
- e. Director - - The director of a Soviet educational institution, comparable to a US college president, is not always a qualified man in education. Too often the Soviets place political "hacks" in the position of director of an institution. There are many directors, however, who are very well qualified and able men.
5. As I have pointed out above, a Soviet "Kandidat" is essentially equal to the master's degree in the US. In many respects it is somewhat above the master's degree because of the intensive research in a particular field, and the greater length of time needed to become a "Kandidat". However, a "Kandidat" in the Soviet is not the equivalent of a US doctor. In terms of completed research, a "Kandidat" does have as much experience in certain fields as a US doctor but his knowledge of the entire field is limited. This applies also to the Soviet "Doktor".

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